

Editorial

Graduate Neonatal Nursing Research

It is indeed a great pleasure to assist the Neonatal Track graduates from the Master's of Science in Nursing (MScN) program at the University of Rwanda (UR) with the publication of their research in a special issue in the Rwanda Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences (RJMHS). All 13 students from the track are featured in this Graduate Neonatal Nursing Research special issue.

We began the publishing process in June 2019 when a student I was supervising, Patricie Mujawimana, asked for assistance to publish her research. The idea quickly ballooned into a Neonatal Special Issue, and Patricie immediately recruited her colleagues, set-up a WhatsApp group, and helped plan a series of writing retreats. I left Rwanda on July 31, and we continued to communicate remotely. In August, the Dean's office sped up the process by advising all students to submit a manuscript draft to the RJMHS before graduation in November.

In addition to Patricie's invaluable contribution, I am grateful to my UR colleagues and friends who made this publication possible: Dean Madeleine Mukeshimana, Former Dean Donatilla Mukamana, Dr Darius Gishoma, and Fausta Uwingabire MScN in the Dean's Office; RJMHS Editor Professor Jean Bosco Gahutu, Managing Editor Emile Nisingizwe, and others in the editorial team; and visiting Elsevier senior editor Jasmin Bakker, who provided the initial support for publishing a special issue in nursing in 2018. Finally, a special thank you to our Vice-Chancellor Professor Phil Cotton, OBE, and the University of Illinois Chicago, for their substantial and sustained support.

This special issue features 13 articles, all of which used a quantitative design and focused on health issues affecting the neonate. Article 1 surveyed noise levels in several Neonatal Intensive Care Units in Kigali City.

Articles 2-6 surveyed postnatal mothers and care of the newborn, including neonatal danger signs, essential newborn care, neonatal hypothermia, umbilical cord care, and early initiation of breastfeeding within the first-hour post-birth. Articles 7-9 measured associations between

variables, including hypertensive disorders in pregnancy and neonatal outcomes, risk factors related to neonatal jaundice, and factors related to low-birth-weight neonates. Articles 10-12 observed healthcare providers (HCPs) performing basic neonatal resuscitation in the delivery room, immediate newborn care, and skills retention of Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) at two-days and six-weeks post-training at health centers. Article 13 assessed HCPs awareness of climate change and potential neonatal health risks. These topics are immensely important to Rwanda, as local research is vital to scale up evidence-based interventions that improve newborn health outcomes.

In addition to supporting Dr Lisssauer's recommendations for future research, I would like to make two of my own. First, the final article featured in this special issue addresses climate change. A large systematic review in the US recently published in JAMA (Bekkar et al., 2020) showed a statistically significant association between heat exposure and air pollution related to climate change and adverse pregnancy outcomes. As an emerging topic, research in this area is highly applicable, and therefore, highly valuable to Africa. Second, with Covid-19 and other infectious disease outbreaks, a researcher may avoid contagious exposure by conducting an online study, if feasible, or retrospective study with care to avoid or reduce sources of bias.

Advancing research among graduate midwives and nurses is critical to forming context-based evidence and protocols, which can make a better future for neonates and families in Rwanda.

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Guest Editor